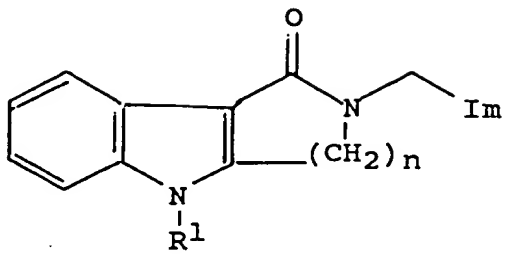
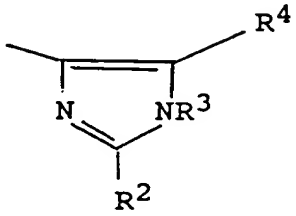
WE CLAIM:

1. A compound of formula (I)

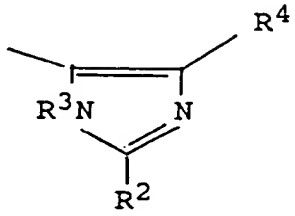


(I)

wherein Im represents an imidazolyl group of the formula:



or



and $R^1$ represents a hydrogen atom or a group selected from $C_{1-6}$alkyl, $C_{3-6}$alkenyl, $C_{3-10}$alkynyl, $C_{3-7}$cycloalkyl, $C_{3-7}$cycloalkyl$C_{1-4}$alkyl, phenyl, phenyl$C_{1-3}$alkyl, phenylmethoxymethyl, phenoxyethyl, phenoxymethyl; ~~$-CO_2R^5$, $-COR^5$, $-CONR^5R^6$ or $-SO_2R^5$ (wherein $R^5$ and $R^6$, which may be the same or different, each represents a hydrogen atom, a $C_{1-6}$alkyl or $C_{3-7}$cycloalkyl group or a phenyl or phenyl$C_{1-4}$alkyl group, in which the phenyl group is optionally substituted by one or more $C_{1-4}$alkyl, $C_{1-4}$alkoxy or hydroxy groups or halogen atoms, with the proviso that $R^5$ does not represent a hydrogen atom when $R^1$ represents a group $-CO_2R^5$ or $-SO_2R^5$);~~

one of the groups represented by $R^2$, $R^3$ and $R^4$ is a hydrogen atom or a $C_{1-6}$alkyl, $C_{3-7}$cycloalkyl, $C_{3-6}$alkenyl, phenyl or phenyl$C_{1-3}$alkyl group, and each of the other two

groups, which may be the same or different, represents a hydrogen atom or a $C_{1-6}$alkyl group;

n represents 2 or 3;

or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof.

2. A compound according to claim 1 in which $R^1$ represents a $C_{1-4}$alkyl, $C_{3-4}$alkynyl, $C_{5-6}$cycloalkyl, $C_{5-6}$cycloalkylmethyl, phenyl$C_{1-2}$alkyl, or phenylmethoxymethyl ~~or N,N-di$C_{1-3}$alkylcarboxamido group~~.

3. A compound according to claim 1 in which $R^2$, $R^3$ and $R^4$ each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a $C_{1-3}$alkyl group.

4. A compound according to claim 1 in which $R^1$ represents a hydrogen atom or a $C_{1-4}$alkyl, $C_{3-4}$alkenyl, $C_{3-4}$alkynyl, $C_{5-6}$cycloalkyl, $C_{5-6}$cycloalkylmethyl, phenyl$C_{1-2}$alkyl, or phenylmethoxymethyl, ~~N,N-di$C_{1-3}$alkylcarboxamido or $C_{1-3}$alkylsulphonyl group;~~ $R^2$ represents a hydrogen atom; and $R^3$ and $R^4$ each represent a hydrogen atom or a $C_{1-3}$alkyl group.

5. A compound according to claim 1 in which $R^1$ represents a methyl, n-propyl, prop-2-ynyl, cyclopentyl, cyclopentylmethyl, or benzyl ~~or N,N-dimethylcarboxamido group;~~ $R^2$ and $R^3$ each represent a hydrogen atom; and $R^4$ represents a methyl group.

6. A compound according to claim 4 in which n represents 2.

7. A compound according to claim 5 in which n represents 2.

8. 2,3,4,5-Tetrahydro-5-methyl-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;

and physiologically acceptable ~~salts and solvates~~ thereof.

9. A compound selected from:
2,3,4,5-Tetrahydro-5-(phenylmethyl)-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;
5-cyclopentyl-2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;
2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-5-propyl-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;
5-(cyclopentylmethyl)-2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;
3,4,5,6-tetrahydro-6-methyl-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-azepino[4,3-b]indol-1(2H)-one;
2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-N,N-dimethyl-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1-oxo-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-5-carboxamide;
2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl-5-(2-propynyl)-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;
and physiologically acceptable salts and solvates thereof.

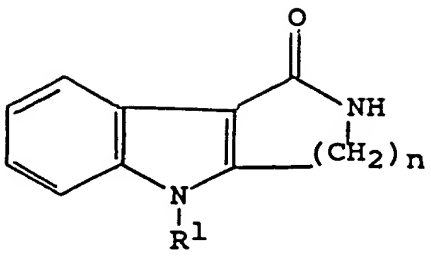
10. A compound according to claim 1 in the form of a hydrochloride, hydrobromide, sulphate, alkylsulphonate, arylsulphonate, phosphate, acetate, citrate, succinate, tartrate, fumarate or maleate salt.

11. The compound of claim 8 in the form of a hydrochloride salt.

12. The compound of claim 8 in the form of a maleate salt.

13. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof, which process comprises:

(A) alkylating a compound of formula (II)



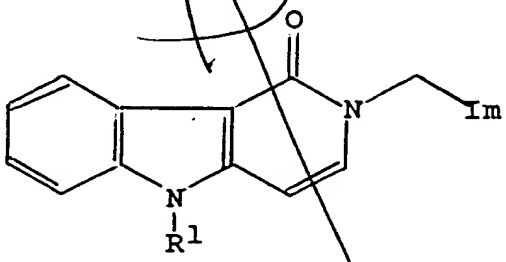
(II)

with a compound of formula (III)

$$LCH_2\text{-}Im \qquad \text{(III)}$$

or a protected derivative thereof, wherein L represents a leaving atom or group, followed if necessary by removal of any protecting groups present; or

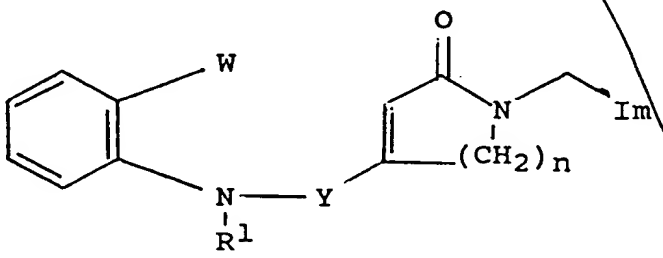
(B) for the preparation of a compound of formula (I) in which n is 2, hydrogenating a compound of formula (IV)



(IV)

or a protected derivative thereof, followed if necessary by removal of any protecting groups present; or

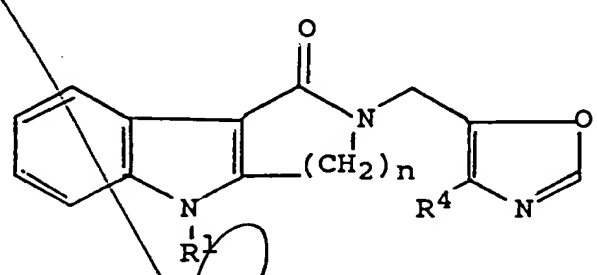
(C) cyclising a compound of formula (V)



(V)

wherein W represents a hydrogen atom and Y represents the group NH, or W represents a halogen atom and Y represents a bond, or a salt or protected derivative thereof, followed if necessary by removal of any protecting groups present; or

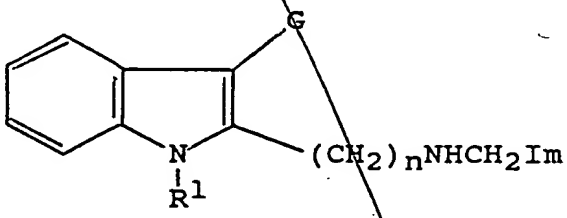
(D) for the preparation of a compound of formula (I) in which $R^3$ represents a hydrogen atom, reacting a compound of formula (VI)



(VI)

or a protected derivative thereof, with formamide, followed if necessary by removal of any protecting groups present; or

(E) reacting a compound of formula (VII)



(VII)

where G represents a hydrogen atom, or a protected derivative thereof, with phosgene in the presence of a Lewis acid; or

where G represents a bromine or iodine atom, or a protected derivative thereof, with carbon monoxide in the presence of a palladium (II) salt; followed if necessary by removal of any protecting groups present; or

(F) converting a compound of general formula (I) into another compound of formula (I) using conventional

techniques; or

(G) removing protecting group(s) from a protected form of a compound of formula (I);

and when the compound of formula (I) is obtained as a mixture of enantiomers, optionally resolving the mixture to obtain the desired enantiomer;

and/or where the compound of formula (I) is in the form of a free base, optionally converting the free base into a salt.

14. A pharmaceutical composition for treating a condition caused by a disturbance of "neuronal" 5-HT function which comprises an effective amount to relieve said condition of a compound of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof together with at least one physiologically acceptable carrier or excipient.

15. A pharmaceutical composition for treating nausea and vomiting and/or for promoting gastric emptying which comprises an effective amount to relieve said nausea and vomiting or to promote said gastric emptying of a compound of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof together with at least one physiologically acceptable carrier or excipient.

16. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 in a form adapted for oral or parenteral administration.

17. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 wherein the active ingredient is 2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-5-methyl-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof.

18. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 15

in a form adapted for oral or parenteral administration.

19. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 15 wherein the active ingredient is 2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-5-methyl-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof.

20. A method of treating a condition caused by disturbance of "neuronal" 5-HT function which comprises administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof to relieve said condition.

21. A method of treating nausea and vomiting and/or promoting gastric emptying which comprises administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof to relieve said nausea and vomiting and/or promote said gastric emptying.

Add B'

Add C'